

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FEENEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FEENEY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

SMART SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I am here to express my opposition to H.R. 4200, the fiscal year 2005 Defense Authorization Act. Among other things, the bill would approve an additional \$25 billion for the war in Iraq. For those that may have forgotten, let me refresh your memory.

Last November, that was a mere 6 months ago, Congress approved \$87 billion to fund military operations and reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. At that time, President Bush misleadingly declared that no additional funds would be needed until the year 2005. Since then, funds allocated for Iraq appear to have been misused, misspent and in some cases downright stolen by the companies assigned the tasks of rebuilding Iraq's infrastructure.

It would be totally irresponsible to provide another blank check to this administration, which still has not accounted for how the last \$87 billion was spent. But the last \$87 billion and the \$78 billion before that is just the tip of the iceberg.

The cost of maintaining our forces in Iraq alone costs the United States taxpayers \$5 billion a month, and that does not take into consideration the vast reconstruction costs, and more importantly, the tremendous human costs that we are occurring every single day. That is \$60 billion a year just to continue our military operations in that one country, assuming nothing goes wrong.

And as events in the streets of Fallujah and the abuses within the walls of the Abu Ghraib Prison have shown with this administration in charge, inevitably there will be more things going wrong. In fact, some esti-

mates suggest that the cost of the war in Iraq could approach a total of \$400 billion by 2006.

There are programs in H.R. 4200 that I support, including extending coverage under TRICARE, the military's health care system, to the National Guard and the Reserve forces and their families who lack health insurance.

H.R. 4200 also provides an across-the-board pay increase for military personnel, and it authorizes permanent increases to the imminent danger pay and the family separation allowance.

And finally, H.R. 4200 eliminates the widow's tax which veterans' spouses currently face by improving the existing survivor benefit plan.

I support all of these measures, and I have been working for their passage because each is an important step in keeping our promise to our Nation's servicemen and women, those who have sacrificed so much for their country. But to my great disappointment, in order to support these important measures for our troops and veterans, I would also have to support the development of new nuclear weapons and a gigantic missile defense system, which has never been proven effective, not to mention another gigantic \$25 billion spending bill for the war in Iraq.

An open check for the President, despite the fact that, one, we have no idea why we are in Iraq in the first place; two, we have no idea how our money is being spent; and three, we have no exit strategy.

There has to be a better way, Mr. Speaker, because the Bush doctrine of spending without accountability has been tried in Iraq and it is failing.

But there is another way. I have introduced legislation to create a SMART security platform for the 21st century. SMART stands for sensible, multilateral American response to terrorism.

Instead of spending billions on new bunker-buster nuclear weapons and the President's beloved missile defense system, which would not provide an effective defense against a full frontal missile attack, SMART security calls for stronger and smarter investments at home, on homeland security and first responders, and abroad on peacekeeping and conflict-prevention programs.

SMART security defends America by relying on the very best of America: our commitment to peace and freedom, our compassion for the people of the world, and our capacity for multilateral leadership.

Let us be smart, let us be smart about our future. SMART security is tough, SMART security is pragmatic and patriotic, and SMART security will keep America safe.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FEENEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SOUDER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I ask to claim the time of the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

HAPPY 102ND BIRTHDAY TO MRS. MAE BELL CARTER OF WOODLAND, GEORGIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great Georgian who has lived to witness almost half our State's history. Born in 1902, Mrs. Mae Bell Carter of Woodland, Georgia, will turn 102 years young on May 29.

Mrs. Carter was born in Woodland, married in Woodland, and raised her family in Woodland. Needless to say, she is a fixture in that community and the mother of the mayor and a member of the city council. Mrs. Carter obviously instilled in her children the heart for public service that she has personified for her entire life.

Mr. Speaker, she was long a member of the "Mothers Board" that performed missionary work for the people of Talbot County, nursing the sick and bringing food to the less fortunate. Perhaps her enthusiasm for mission work springs from her long affiliation with the aptly named Friendship Baptist Church in Woodland where she has been a member for at least 90 years.

Her family says in all her years she has been as fashionable as she has been charitable. She is always finely attired and actually walked every day to the post office wearing high-heel shoes. I can attest to this, Mr. Speaker. I met with her recently during a Medicare prescription drug card town hall meeting down in Talbot County. What a fine, distinguished lady she is and a credit to my district, to the State of Georgia, and to the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my fellow House Members on behalf of the people of Talbot County and Georgia's 11th Congressional District, the district that I am so privileged to represent in west Georgia, to join me tonight in wishing Mrs. Mae Bell Carter a happy and a blessed 102nd birthday.

ARMENIA-AZERBAIJAN MILITARY DISPARITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to address recent reports that I believe signal a conflict in Azeri President Ilham Aliyev's interest in promoting a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

I am particularly troubled by reports from the BBC last week that President Aliyev said that, while he would continue to try to resolve the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict by peaceful means, the Azeri army is able at any moment to free what he called "our territory." The article continues that President Aliyev stated, "We have every right to do that, to restore our territorial integrity."

Such statements, Mr. Speaker, are unsettling and send a message to Armenia as well as to all those involved in working towards a peaceful resolution to the conflict that Azerbaijan is prepared to undertake a military approach to addressing the conflict should recommendations by the Minsk Group not agree with Azerbaijan's position. In fact, such statements, I believe, Mr. Speaker, send the wrong message to the Minsk Group and undermine ongoing efforts regarding stabilization of the South Caucasus region.

Ten years after a mutually signed cease-fire in the region and 3 years after President Kocharian and former President Aliyev came together at Key West, current Azeri President Aliyev has warned that if no concrete issues remain on the agenda regarding a peaceful resolution to Nagorno-Karabagh, then it is "not right to continue and imitate negotiations." President Aliyev's actions and statements do not signal a willingness to negotiate and, in fact, I think they illustrate the opposite. If there is any chance that the parties can move in the direction of a peaceful resolution, President Aliyev must show that he is willing to consider options developed by the Minsk Group without threatening military actions.

In this regard, I would like to highlight from the BBC article that Mr. Aliyev added that the Azeri government's expenditure on Azerbaijan's military was increasing each year and "it will keep increasing in the future." I am discouraged by this, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to address this issue in light of the U.S.'s role in providing military assistance in the region.

I strongly believe we must do everything in our power here in Congress to signal that we will not support the use of military force to address this conflict. Specifically, I call upon Congress and congressional appropriators to restore the military aid parity between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Earlier this year, President Bush's budget proposed including unequal military aid spending to Armenia and Azerbaijan. This request was contrary to a policy agreement between the Congress and the administration that there would be military parity between

the two countries. While the administration believes that the unequal funding will not destroy the balance between Azerbaijan and Armenia, I point to President Aliyev's recent statements and question the Bush administration's recent assurances to Congress before the other Chamber's Foreign Relations Committee.

I would like to point out that waiver language included in section 907 of the Freedom Support Act specifically states that any assistance to Azerbaijan should not be used to undermine or hamper the Karabakh peace process or be used for offensive purposes against Armenia or the Armenian communities in the South Caucasus. President Aliyev's comments regarding current and future increases in Azerbaijan's military funding do not put me at ease that funding from the U.S. either directly or indirectly will not be used to unleash a military campaign against the people of Nagorno-Karabagh.

Amid rising tension and animosity in the region, it is more important today than ever for the United States to be sure that no signal is sent suggesting that one side is being provided a military advantage over the other. Our strength in fostering a diplomatic and peaceful solution is our balanced approach to and for each nation of the South Caucasus. At this time the U.S. should not be providing resources to Azerbaijan that can in any measure be turned into military efforts against Armenia to reclaim Nagorno-Karabagh.

Parity in this regard will help to restore a sense of stability in the region and hopefully add to the U.S.'s evenhandedness in its presence and support for the establishment of a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. McCOTTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. McCOTTER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PENCE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DREIER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HINCHEY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE WAR ON TERRORISM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to be joined by my colleague from Georgia this evening. What we would like to do is to talk a little bit about the war on terrorism, the situation in Iraq, the situation in Afghanistan. We want to start off by providing an answer to some of our colleagues from the other side of the aisle who have been asking the question, In 2004, are we better off than we were 4 years ago? In many ways as we have talked about this issue, we need to recognize and put it in the context of September 11, 2001. For the first time, America has a real and serious response to the war on terrorism. During the 1990s, were we better off in the 1990s as we were attacked in the World Trade Centers in the early 1990s? As our embassies were attacked in Africa? As our barracks were attacked in Saudi Arabia? And as the USS *Cole* was attacked in Yemen, but America did not respond? Was that a good position for us to be in? We found out the cost of neglecting the threat, the emerging threat of global terrorism on September 11. We found out what it would cost us not to have responded during the 1990s.

As this threat emerged, an administration, perhaps even we in Congress, said, this is not a threat that needs a serious focus. We now have an administration, a President, and a Congress that were united in our response to September 11. We said we do face a real threat. We face a global war on terrorism. We face a global war on terrorism that had been emerging throughout the 1990s, but had never been responded to. Now is the time to respond because it is a real threat and it is a threat that we need to take seriously and it is a threat that we need to respond to by taking the war to the terrorists.